ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ENCOUNTER TRANSMISSION
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At issue is the number of encounters to be populated within each 837 Transaction sent to AHCCCS. At one extreme, health plans could limit each 837 Transaction to a single encounter. At the other extreme, there is no absolute limitation to the number of items in a transaction other than the limit imposed by the 12-character length some of 837 control elements (resulting in a theoretical maximum of 999,999,999,999 encounters). 837 Implementation Guides recommend, but do not require, a limit of 5,000 CLM Segments. The Guides view this issue as one to be covered by trading partner agreements.

This decision has implications that are important to AHCCCS and its health plans. Some of these implications are outlined below.

Low Encounter Count Per 837	High Encounter Count Per 837
• Reduces unnecessary rejection of valid encounters due to syntax errors.	• Any syntax error on any encounter will result in rejection of an entire 837 Transaction.
• Greater transmission lengths and data redundancy due to repetition of high-level data in each separate transaction.	• Reduced data repetition and overhead.
• Simpler transaction structures.	• More complex transaction structures.
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In this situation, AHCCCS and its health plans and providers have a variety of alternatives. They include:

• Limiting all electronic encounter submissions to a single encounter per 837 Transaction.
  This approach would ensure that every syntactically valid encounter is accepted for AHCCCS adjudication. No valid items would be rejected because they were part of a bad batch.

• Imposing an encounter per transaction limit.
  This approach would enable submitters to handle 837 Transactions rejected by AHCCCS in the same way that they handle encounter batches that are screened and rejected in the current system. Errors on individual encounters would be corrected and the entire batch resubmitted.

• Imposing no limitation other than the multi-trillion CLM Segment limit required by 837 control field length.
  This approach would minimize data redundancy but could result in rejection of many encounters due to a small number of errors.

• Allowing each submitter to decide on submission size.
  With this approach, AHCCCS would accommodate any number of encounters per 837 Transaction. Submissions would be accepted or rejected on a transaction by transaction basis (ST/SE).